

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104100
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	336233
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Kath Campbell

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Frank Miller
Headteacher	Mrs Tina Willmott
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent nearly three-quarters of their inspection time looking at learning. They observed ten lessons and every teacher was observed at least once. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also met with groups of pupils, parents, governors and staff. They looked at the school's work and scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including policies, child protection procedures and analysis of test results. They also sampled pupils' past and present work and scrutinised 92 parental and 97 pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

whether pupils in Key Stage 2 made adequate progress, particularly in mathematics

- what the school was doing to reverse the dip in writing standards in Key Stage 1 and the downward trend in mathematics standards in Key Stage 2 and how effective initiatives had been
- whether teachers used assessment information with sufficient accuracy to match future work to pupils' needs and abilities
- whether senior leaders and governors measured the impact of initiatives on pupils' learning with enough rigour.

Information about the school

St Augustine's is an average sized school that serves a residential area close to the centre of Solihull in the West Midlands. Most pupils are of White British background and almost all have English as their first language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals.

The school has received a wealth of awards including Healthy Schools, International School Award, Active Mark, Artsmark Silver and Eco School Green Flag in recognition of its work.

During term time, some pupils attend before and after school clubs managed by an external provider.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Augustine's is a school with many strengths. Its excellent pastoral care, guidance and support results in outstanding personal development. The school is particularly good at forging effective partnerships with parents and carers. There is a powerful sense of community and pupils enjoy school a great deal. The headteacher and two assistant headteachers complement each other's skills well. They provide strong leadership and are the major driving force behind improvement. Parents hold the school in high regard. One parent expressed the views of many commenting, 'We are proud to be associated with such a wonderful school.'

By the time pupils leave, they typically reach well above average standards. They achieve well after a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities also make good progress through good quality support. The high overall standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained, although standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 are not quite as impressive. The school is working on this issue and has combined numerous initiatives with targeted support programmes very effectively. Systems for tracking progress have also been refined and now give a far more accurate picture of individual progress. Inspection evidence found strong indications that the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is back on track.

Teaching and learning are good. Thanks to effective monitoring, the quality of teaching is far more consistent than in the past and there are many strong elements. Teaching and support staff work together well as a team and do much to make learning enjoyable. As a result, pupils want to succeed. One feature common to all lessons is pupils' excellent behaviour which results in a very positive climate for learning. Occasionally, teachers do not assess what different groups of pupils have learned in lessons with enough precision. Consequently, activities sometimes do not provide enough challenge. The curriculum is good with some outstanding features. It is very well organised and well planned initiatives to enhance learning permeate the whole curriculum. Information and communication technology is a real strength and a very important part of school life. Through very effective links with partner institutions, pupils have an excellent approach towards keeping fit and healthy. The wealth of opportunities provided to support potentially vulnerable pupils and families is a major factor in the school's outstanding care, guidance and support on offer. Attendance is high because pupils love coming to school.

Leadership and management are good. This is a school where pupils' welfare is at the heart of all its work. Senior leaders and managers know their school very well and have an accurate overview of strengths and weaknesses. Sometimes their self evaluation of,

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for example, pupils' achievement, is over generous. Excellent partnerships with other agencies promote pupils' learning particularly well. The school's long-established links with Loolera in Tanzania provide excellent foundations for outstanding community cohesion. Monitoring of teaching and learning is focused and effective, although occasionally not rigorous or precise enough to ensure the best possible learning opportunities. Although governors are dedicated and highly supportive of the school, they do not have a prominent enough role in monitoring the learning outcomes for pupils. Consequently, they do not always collect enough first-hand information to hold the school to account for what it achieves. A strong performance management programme enables the school to move forward with purpose and determination because staff share a common commitment towards improvement. The school's capacity to sustain improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers use assessment information effectively in order to:
 - provide activities, particularly for more able pupils, that match their ability at a consistently high level of challenge
 - show pupils what they need to do to improve their work through consistently good quality marking
 - identify any potential underachievement and focus more effectively on the learning of different groups.
- Ensure managers at all levels and the governing body monitor the work of the school with greater rigour and precision by:
 - measuring the success of initiatives by their impact on outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring governors have more opportunities to gather first-hand information about the school's work so that they can further develop their role as critical friends.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The 2009 teacher assessment for seven-year-olds showed attainment overall was high, although writing standards dipped slightly. The inspection team focused on the effectiveness of initiatives that had been implemented to rectify any potential weaknesses in writing. Its findings were positive. Initiatives in writing had greatly increased the opportunity for pupils to practise, extend and develop skills. In discussion, both boys and girls expressed positive attitudes towards writing. Evidence from books confirmed good progress and much greater confidence with writing. In Key Stage 2, the progress of pupils, particularly in mathematics, was the focus for the inspection team. Initiatives, such as greater consistency in the quality of teaching, greater precision in tracking progress and targeted intervention for individual pupils were found to be very effective. Evidence taken from lesson observations and current work also showed more pupils working at higher levels than last year, with boys and girls currently making

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equally good progress.

Pupils are immensely proud of their school and know they are part of a very caring community. They eagerly embrace responsibility and most pupils develop into mature and confident individuals. Respect and consideration are central to the school's work. As a result, almost all pupils behave exceptionally well and participate enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. In discussion they say they feel safe and have a valued voice through their school council. They report that there are rarely any incidents of inappropriate behaviour. They take adopting a healthy lifestyle very seriously. Opportunities, such as becoming prayer friends, frequently establish long-term friendships between younger and older pupils. A strong Catholic ethos underpins excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Involvement in eco projects and activities such as 'Big Sing', make a major contribution to pupils' personal outcomes. One pupil summed up the views of many by commenting, 'I think it's the best school ever.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teachers use a range of imaginative strategies that successfully motivate pupils' learning. They have very strong relationships with pupils, ensuring success through enjoyment. Lessons are typically well taught. Teachers use interactive whiteboards particularly well to capture pupils' interest. Searching questions challenge pupils' thinking and motivate them to make good progress. Learning is at its best during group activities, when teaching and high quality support staff work very effectively as a team. There is, however, some variation in the quality of marking. It does not always sufficiently guide pupils to the next steps. Teachers' use of assessment is also an area for development. Although satisfactory overall, it is not yet fully recognised by all teachers as an important tool in moving pupils forward. Consequently, activities do not always sufficiently challenge the more able.

There are notable strengths within the school's rich and diverse curriculum. Swimming and musical achievement are very strong features. Curriculum topics succeed in motivating boys and girls equally well. Themed events such as a mathematics week promote key skills very successfully because they combine learning across subjects. High levels of participation in a wide range of good quality enrichment opportunities support pupils' enjoyment of school. The well structured personal, social and health education programme makes a very strong contribution to outstanding personal outcomes. In order to develop a more cohesive, integrated approach to cross curricular work the school recognises the need for further 'fine tuning'.

The school is an exceptionally supportive community, where all pupils are able to thrive socially and academically. Pupils' care and welfare are a very high priority. Older pupils care a great deal about younger ones and this successfully maintains a happy and harmonious atmosphere. Pupils in need of personal support receive excellent guidance, enabling them to participate fully in school life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has developed a clear reflective vision for continuous improvement. The senior leadership team successfully embed ambition and show a determined commitment towards improving overall school performance. Staff share their commitment and drive. Managers at all levels have a clear overview of strengths and weaknesses. Safeguarding procedures are very secure. The school is effective in identifying key areas for improvement and the school development plan is a valuable

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working document. Purposeful monitoring has greatly improved the consistency of teaching. However, the school's process of monitoring and evaluation occasionally lacks rigour and precision, particularly when measuring the success of initiatives on pupils' learning. The governing body is well-organised and highly committed to the school. It has a satisfactory overview of the school's performance but does not monitor the work of the school with enough rigour to know whether pupils are doing well enough.

The school is strongly inclusive and every pupil feels valued as an individual. Pupils are made very aware of the need to tackle discrimination, particularly through their links with partner schools nationally and internationally. Community cohesion is a real strength at a local and global level. Pupils gain impressive insight into the needs and aspirations of a diverse range of communities and are heavily involved in charitable works.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly effective in establishing firm foundations for good personal outcomes. Staff develop excellent relationships with families. Home visits encourage parents and carers to become fully involved in their child's learning right from the start. Children settle into routines quickly and learning is fun. They have a good early understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. The staff take every opportunity to develop children's language, literacy and numeracy skills. They work very effectively as a team, providing an exciting range of

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activities that successfully engage children in learning. There is an appropriate balance between independent and adult led activities. Children have ample opportunities to work and explore indoors or outside. The good ratio of adults to children enables those who are potentially vulnerable, or who need extra support, to gain in confidence because they receive individual attention. Teaching is good and children make particularly good progress when working with an adult in 'focus groups'. Independent activities are closely monitored to assess children's progress. 'My learning journey' books provide good insight into each child's progress. Valuable assessment information is used to move children to the next steps. However, it is not always used with enough precision to match activities to the needs, interests and abilities of individual children. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there is a shared commitment towards sustaining improvement.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They particularly like:

- their children's enjoyment of school
- the quality of teaching
- the support their children receive
- the way the headteacher leads and manages the school.

There are very few concerns. A small minority of parents feel:

- the school does not take enough notice of parents' suggestions and concerns
- their children do not do enough sport
- the school does not give them enough information about their child's progress
- the school does not always meet my child's particular needs.

None of these concerns were supported by parents spoken to during the inspection. The school acknowledged that extra curricular sporting clubs were only available for older pupils because of the demands on staff working in a small school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 237 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	61	34	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	75	23	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	35	55	60	3	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	41	51	56	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	46	51	44	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	48	46	50	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	48	44	48	4	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	47	55	37	43	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	44	45	50	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	51	41	47	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	40	46	52	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	58	35	38	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	63	33	36	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Monday 1 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Solihull, B91 3NZ

Thank you very much for looking after Mr Barraclough and me so well when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you very much about your work and watching you in lessons and around the school. We also enjoyed talking to members of the school council.

You go to a good school. Some things are excellent.

Here are some of the many things we liked:

Your behaviour is excellent. Well done!

You get on well with the grown ups who teach and look after you.

You care about each other and enjoy school very much.

You know a lot about how to be fit and healthy.

These are the things we have asked Mrs Willmott and the other members of staff to do to make your school even better:

Make sure the work they give you is hard enough.

Always show you how to make your work better when they mark your work.

Check more carefully on whether you are doing well enough.

You should be very proud of your school. Keep trying to do your best because it's very important.

My best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Kath Campbell

Lead inspector

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